

ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS' DEBUT IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has transformed the South African political landscape since it was established in 2013. In the 2016 municipal election, the EFF won 8.2 percent of the national vote making it the third biggest party after the ANC and the Democratic Alliance (DA). It did not take over any municipalities, but it performed well enough to be the kingmaker in 13 hung councils, including three metros. This paper discusses the EFF's electoral campaign and performance in the 2016 local general election (LGE). It asks whether the EFF has transcended the personality politics of its leader to attract its desired constituency on a broad scale. Has the party managed to move beyond a politics of spectacle to develop the content of its political value proposition? Given the organisational challenges it faces, what are its prospects of being a serious contender for national government in 2019?

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has transformed the South African political landscape since it was established, in 2013, by expelled African National Congress (ANC)

Youth League president, Julius Malema. It won 6.3 percent of the popular vote in its first election in 2014, allowing it to take up twenty-five seats in the National Assembly and to become the official opposition in two provinces – Limpopo and North West (IEC, 2016a). This was a remarkable achievement for a party that had only existed for a few months. In the 2016 municipal election, the EFF won 8.2 percent of the national vote, making it the third biggest party after the ANC and the Democratic Alliance (DA), which won 53.9 percent and 26.9 percent, respectively. The EFF did not win any council outright, but received 761 seats in councils nationwide (IEC, 2016b). This was a satisfactory performance for a new party, but fell short of expectations that it would breach the 10 percent threshold or take over governance of some municipalities (*Times Live*, 4 August 2016).

Electoral success is the least of the EFF story, though. Through its disruptive political engagement in parliament and its clever use of the courts, the EFF has succeeded in setting the national political agenda and stimulating unprecedented public interest in the country's political institutions. It was the party's activism that kept the

issue of security upgrades to President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla homestead in the public consciousness, long after the ANC had hoped to squash the issue. The EFF was the first party to highlight the role of the Gupta family in government decisions, making the term "state capture" a part of the public lexicon. Some of the tactics the party used were disruption and non-cooperation in parliament, leading to frequent clashes with the speaker of parliament, Baleka Mbete, and resulted in their being, forcibly, removed from the National Assembly chamber on several occasions. It was the EFF that approached the Constitutional Court, directly, to institute legal action to contest the ad hoc Nkandla committee that, they argued, violated the Public Protector's constitutional powers. In April 2016, a full bench of the court confirmed the powers of the Public Protector and found that Zuma "had failed to uphold, defend and respect the Constitution as the supreme law of the land". (Grootes, 2016). This finding is the most significant indictment of Zuma's leadership, since he became president in 2009, and set the tone for a bruising campaign for the 2016 local government election.

That the EFF has had such a major impact on South African politics indicates that the party has proven itself to be more than "a case of media hype over substance" (Friedman, 2014). In the run up to the 2016 municipal election, observers were curious to see whether the EFF would be able to repeat its 2014 success. Local government is notoriously difficult to govern and has been the site of widespread service delivery protests across the country. Municipal governance issues, such as water and sanitation, road maintenance and waste

management require technical expertise and do not easily lend themselves to the kind of political spectacle that has served the EFF so well at national level. Slogans such as "Zupta must fall" and "Pay back the money" are hard to translate to the more mundane administrative issues of local government. Furthermore, the mixed ward and proportional representation (PR) electoral system at municipal level requires an extensive organisational machinery to be able to put up ward candidates in as many wards as possible across the country. Would the EFF be able to mobilise, at community level, to put up ward candidates? Would the party prove itself to be more than a one-man show?

Populism is a useful lens through which to assess the EFF. Many features of its politics are consistent with the rise of populist movements of "the people" against "the elite" in a range of contexts across the globe from the Brexit campaign, in Britain, to the Red Shirts, in Thailand. Using a framework developed by Moffitt and Tormey (2014) in a previous article, I analysed the EFF's politics in terms of the constitutive relationship between political style and substance. This was significant, because the party's distinctive style has been criticised for masking a lack of political substance. In these highly mediated times, when social media has made everyone with a smart phone a potential broadcaster, the optics and spectacle of politics matters more than ever before. While much of the debate about the EFF has been about where to place it on the ideological spectrum (right-wing/fascist or left-wing/progressive), I have argued that this is a false dichotomy that does not help us understand the EFF's politics, or its appeal to voters.

The Moffitt and Tormey (2014) model of political style has three main elements: 1. Appeal to "the people", which the EFF did in its founding manifesto where it stated it represents the poor, marginalised masses of South Africa who continue to be exploited by political and economic elites. 2. The use of crisis, breakdown and threat to simplify the terms of political debate and promote radical, decisive solutions to political problems. This was seen in the EFF's use of the Marikana massacre, being expelled from parliamentary debates and the Nkandla controversy to advance its political agenda. 3. "Bad manners" or disregard for behaving appropriately within the rules of formal political institutions. This was seen in the EFF's "revolutionary" dress code and refusal to abide by certain parliamentary rules.

The main purpose of this article, therefore, is to determine how the party has translated or harnessed its populism in this local election. This is a critical point of enquiry, for local elections are vastly different to national elections. For a relatively new party, contesting local elections is particularly hard, as it is still establishing local presence in many parts of the country. This presents the challenge of establishing party structures while simultaneously, contesting local elections. How the party dealt with this challenge receives attention in this paper. Following an analysis of the party's performance in this election, the paper examines its prospects in the next national elections, scheduled for 2019.

The article begins with a brief conceptual discussion to set the terms of analysis. Then it moves on to an examination of the EFF's 2016 LGE campaign, including

its manifesto, campaign methods and important events. Thirdly, it discusses the EFF's performance in the elections as well as its role in the formation of governments in several hung councils across the country. It closes with some thoughts on the EFF's development as a party and its prospects for the 2019 elections.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The 2016 election campaign took place within a political context of vocal dissatisfaction with President Jacob Zuma's political leadership and several scandals about his stewardship of the country, including the financing of security upgrades to his private residence and the influence of the Gupta family on cabinet appointments. This context was advantageous to the EFF, as it has been at the forefront of the charge against Zuma's leadership, the climax of which was the verdict of the Constitutional Court on 31 March 2016 that Zuma had violated his terms of office by failing to comply with the Public Protector's report on the Nkandla upgrades. As the party was contesting its first local government election, the attention and publicity it received from its stance on national government issues was an important entry point into its 2016 campaign.

However, the party faced significant challenges in mounting a successful election campaign at local level, because of resource constraints and the difficulty of contesting, nationwide, in effectively 258 separate elections at once (Fakir & Potgieter, 2016). The mixed ward and PR electoral system at local government benefits big parties, because they can put up candidates in all

wards in the country and ward votes are counted based on the overall proportion of votes that is used to allocate PR seats in councils. For a relatively small party like the EFF, having enough candidates to run in wards across the country can be a major challenge. Nevertheless, the EFF had candidates contesting in every province in the country and almost the majority of wards. This paper evaluates the EFF's campaign in terms of the party's rallies, its manifesto and campaign costs.

Rallies and Manifesto

Attendance at political rallies and the ability to fill up stadiums was, curiously, a particular point of competition between the ANC, DA and EFF in this election. While this seems an arbitrary concern in a country troubled by such significant socio-economic challenges, filling stadiums became a proxy for political support in uncertain political times. Both politicians and political analysts were uncertain of the extent to which ANC political scandals had affected the loyalty of the electorate, the appeal of a Mmusi Maimane-led DA and the popularity of the EFF. Thus, crowds at rallies became a yardstick for political actors and observers alike. At the EFF's manifesto launch, on 30 April 2016, at Orlando Stadium, as well as the 30 July 2016 Tshela Thupa closing rally at Peter Mokaba stadium in Limpopo, Julius Malema contrasted the EFF's organic support of people who willingly attended party events with the alleged "rent a crowd" practice of the ANC. He consistently contrasted the EFF's appeal to the people to "manipulation" by the ANC. The EFF's campaign reinforced its image as a populist mass movement with well-attended

rallies and a manifesto that was developed through a process of consultative meetings with constituents across the country. This populism is reflected in the manifesto promises, which respond directly to popular grievances, such as the opening hours of municipal offices, a lack of fresh food in townships and informal settlements and the inaccessibility of ward councillors.

At the manifesto launch, Malema insisted that the party was making commitments, not promises, to the people, as he did not intend to play with their emotions like the ANC has (Munusamy, 2016). He reinforced the EFF as a party of black South Africans by explaining the choice of hosting the launch in Soweto with the words "the umbilical cord of the EFF is buried here in Soweto", evoking the practice used in all African cultures to introduce a child to the ancestors and establish its home (Malema, 2016a). The leaders and activists of the June 1976 uprising were invoked as the ancestors in whose legacy the party follows. Malema set out to establish the EFF's revolutionary credentials, exemplified in "shaking parliament" by rejecting the Eurocentric dress code and seeing to the eradication of the colonial and apartheid legacy in the institution (Malema, 2016a)

In the opening remarks of the manifesto, Malema states that "the EFF contests political power through elections within the difficult confines of electoral rules and systems that favour existing political parties. The EFF's contestation of political power through elections should, however, not be mistaken with our revolutionary determination to remove the current government by other revolutionary means" (EFF, 2016:1). Malema

goes on to criticise the structure of local government, which he argues is inappropriate for the South African context. The system of conditional grants, in which municipalities apply for funding from provincial and national government, is discriminatory against rural and poor municipalities, as they are unable to generate additional income from their residents and it is unsuitable for "a politically polarised environment", because these grants can be manipulated for political ends (EFF, 2016:1). Malema contends that the funding of municipalities merely reproduces apartheid structural and spatial inequalities, because the system is based on assumptions that all citizens are employed, live in formal housing and can sustain the municipality through rates and taxes. This system is inappropriate in a country with high unemployment and poverty. This claim is false, however. The system of conditional grants was instituted to, specifically, mitigate income inequality between municipalities by providing additional financial support to poor municipalities. This is another example of the party's populism, as it uses popular statements that resonate with ordinary citizens, regardless of their factual validity. This questioning of the political system and its adequacy for serving the needs of "the people", while, simultaneously, presenting a manifesto for participation in the system, is a populist strategy that allows the party to accept the perks of participation without having to take full responsibility for the system's effects. The EFF is now one of the "existing political parties" favoured by the electoral system because it can access funds from the IEC, on the basis of its parliamentary representation and has access to important financial resources

such as the share it receives from its MPs' salaries. Yet, it continues to set itself apart from the elite and identify itself as part of the majority of South Africans who are excluded from formal political institutions. Strategically, this allows the party to emphasise its "newcomer" status and minimise the expectations of the electorate.

According to Malema, the manifesto was developed out of 1000 meetings across South Africa to find out the real demands of the people. The ideas in the manifesto were, thus, generated by the "poorest of the poor" in rural areas, townships and squatter camps – those "ordinary people, particularly the black nation, who are ignored and not listened to by anyone" (Malema, 2016a). The goal of responding to the direct grievances of communities is evident in the manifesto, which contains a motley mix of issues that fall within the jurisdiction of local, provincial and national government. This is explicitly stated in the manifesto introduction, which says that the party seeks to use municipalities for economic transformation by going beyond the legislated responsibilities of local government and implementing programmes for education, skills, safety and security, training, healthcare and the food economy. There are seven "core values" on which the manifesto is based:

- Building local state capacity with the aim of abolishing tenders.
- Creating sustainable jobs for residents of the municipality.
- Provision of quality basic services such as water, sanitation, healthcare, electricity and clean communities for all.

- Providing a conducive and accessible environment for education, skills and training.
- Building and maintaining quality and safe infrastructure for all through labour absorptive and efficient methods.
- Stimulating local economic activity and participation through the localisation of economic activities.
- Guaranteeing safety and security for all (EFF, 2016:5-6).

Specific manifesto promises are intended to focus on the needs of "the people". These promises include building fresh food markets in each municipality to sell local produce, opening municipal offices six days a week to accommodate full-time workers, and the direct employment of all municipal workers with a decent wage and benefits. One of the primary responsibilities of municipalities is the zoning and distribution of land. Municipalities often own extensive tracts of land and are also responsible for determining the purposes for which private land can be used. Given that land expropriation is one of the EFF's organising tenets, its manifesto commitments on land are important. Among its promises are passing by-laws to expropriate and allocate land equitably for residential, industrial and other activities "with the principle of use it or lose it", allocating land to "ordinary citizens", allocating stands to people for free, the provision of bulk services to all land designated for residential use, providing additional land for burial, providing bulk irrigation services for agricultural land and making land available for religious,

recreational and sporting facilities (EFF, 2016:9-10). The party commits to building spacious houses with a separate kitchen, living area and a minimum of two bedrooms to allow parents "to touch each other without the disturbance of children" and improve the quality of life of the people (EFF, 2016:13; Malema, 2016a). In those cases where people can afford to build houses, the party promises to provide stands with all basic services including flush toilets. This kind of direct appeal to people's immediate needs was met with the loudest cheers by the crowd at Orlando Stadium and is indicative of the effectiveness of the EFF's populist message.

A notable feature of the EFF's manifesto commitments is their focus on the character and responsibilities of the party's elected local government representatives. After criticising the non-responsiveness and unaccountability of ANC councillors, the party sets out a list of ideal behaviour for its representatives. These include EFF councillors residing where they are elected and having an open door policy in their communities, holding at least one community meeting per month, being available 24 hours per day, being a mother/father figure to all orphans in their wards, making sure no one in their wards goes hungry, assisting in the burial of all poor people in their wards and ensuring that all schools and clinics in their wards have water and electricity. Among the qualities of the EFF's revolutionary councillors are:

- A revolutionary councillor is a well-informed/knowledgeable professional in the way he/she approaches the political question of revolution.

- A revolutionary councillor abolishes his/her ego and attachments to personal success; she or he is selfless.
- A revolutionary councillor is never depressed, bored and sad; there is always something to do and revolutionary actions to be taken.
- A revolutionary councillor does not hold grudges or complain about unnecessary matters.
- A revolutionary councillor always reads and listens to people to understand the struggles and suffering of the people on the ground.
- A revolutionary councillor does not dwell in the conspicuous consumerist practices that seek to blindly show off privilege (EFF, 2016:22-23).

These standards of conduct are unrealistic even by manifesto standards as they expect almost superhuman levels of energy and commitment from the mere mortals who stand for public election. It is significant that these commitments apply to directly elected ward councillors, more than those elected on the PR ballot. Since the EFF ended up winning very few wards in this election, receiving the majority of its council seats on the PR portion of the mixed system, these are commitments that will not be widely tested in practice.

Campaign Funding

Amid rumours that the ANC spent nearly R1 billion on its campaign and the DA spent R350 million, there were many questions

asked about the cost of the EFF's campaign and how it raised funds. In 2015, the party's national spokesman, Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, admitted that "The question of resources is the biggest challenge for the EFF. Finding the money for campaigning to have the ability to support the movement is tough" (eNCA, 24 July 2015). The party hosted a fundraising gala dinner after its manifesto launch in May 2016. Addressing about 100 potential donors, Malema reportedly asked them to commit to a monthly subscription of R1 000 a month to the party. He reportedly said "If you are true to the cause, ask for the forms to sign a subscription and say: 'I'm going to donate R2 000, R3 000, R1 000, to the EFF every month.'" Especially the next three months – they are very crucial (*The Citizen*, 2 May 2016).

After the election, Malema stated that the party had spent less than R10 million on its entire campaign. In an interview with Sam Mkokeli (2016) from the *Financial Mail*, he said of the party's campaign method, "it's not expensive at all, because in the EFF we maximise the little resources we have. We sleep in the same rented places, we share the small accommodation, we travel in the same cars, we have no convoys and the mobilisation depends largely on word of mouth, because there are no posters and no leaflets". Apparently, the party had a number of large logistics trucks containing public address systems that allowed them to organise meetings and rallies on the spot. According to Mkokeli, several community meetings were hosted daily with Malema doing "three such meetings a day, with his leadership colleagues doing the same in other parts of the country". A party

spokesman said this allowed the party to speak to "plus-minus 50 000 people in a day and we haven't spent more than R10 000." (Mkokeli, 2016).

At the Polokwane rally, Malema explained that the EFF's campaign was funded through its allocation from the IEC, compulsory contributions from its MPs and a bank loan from Standard Bank. He added: "We didn't have money from government. We don't have money from tenderpreneurs. We don't have money from all those dodgy characters" (Malema, 2016b). To dispel any doubts, Malema challenged the media to look at the party's books to see where its money comes from, as they have nothing to hide. The point was to underscore that the EFF is not a proxy for any interests; its members are committed to the party's cause; hence, they're making financial contributions; and that the party is genuine in its message. This, the party argued, put them in contrast to the ANC.

Accordingly, the ANC's use of money for its campaign is a point the EFF frequently brought up during and after the election. On 8 September, the party opened a case of corruption and maladministration against former Tshwane mayor, Kgosietsso Ramokgopa, for the alleged use of the municipal budget to pay for ANC billboards during the election campaign. Tshwane councillor, Benjamin Disoloane, accused the ANC of financial malfeasance: "Financial resources of the City were, fraudulently, used to boost the electoral fortunes of the corrupt and useless ANC in their dismal bid to win the City again. Despite using the resources of the City to campaign, the residents of Tshwane still rejected the corrupt ANC" (eNCA,

9 September 2016). The relationship between money and politics is a sore point for many South African citizens, as it is seen as the source of government corruption. A Pew Global survey found South Africans ranked government corruption as the third biggest problem facing the country (after crime and a lack of employment opportunities) (Wike *et al.*, 2016). The EFF cleverly played on these concerns to distinguish itself from the ANC and to also protect itself from accusations of corruption.

ELECTION PERFORMANCE

The EFF improved on its previous tally. It also landed in the coveted position of kingmaker in several important councils, including four metropolitan municipalities.

Breakdown of Electoral Performance

The EFF had a notable performance in the election, winning 8.19 percent of the vote compared to the 6.3 percent that it won in 2014, a nearly two-point increase. This made it the third biggest party after the ANC, which won 53.9 percent, and the DA, which won 26.9 percent. In 2014, the EFF won a total of 1 169 259 of the national vote, which almost doubled in this election to 2 282 385. The party did not win any council outright, but won 761 seats nationally. Most of these seats were PR seats. The EFF won only eight ward seats nationwide, which was a big disappointment for a party that claims to represent the will of the people. A provincial breakdown of the party's performance provides a picture of where it had its strongest showing.

TABLE 1: EFF gains/losses per province by percentage

Province	2014	2016	Gain/Loss
EC	3.48	5.12	1.64
FS	8.15	9.95	1.80
GAUTENG	10.30	11.38	1.08
KZN	1.85	3.47	1.62
LIMP	10.74	16.81	6.07
MP	6.26	9.40	3.14
NW	13.21	15.60	2.39
NC	4.96	8.71	3.75
WC	2.11	2.73	0.62
NATIONAL	6.35	8.31	1.96

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa

From the table above, it is clear that the EFF improved its performance in all the provinces. It received the most votes in Gauteng, Limpopo and North West, which consolidates these provinces as party strongholds. In the North West and Limpopo, it was the second best performing party after the ANC. The EFF's performance in Limpopo and North West challenges the idea, pandered after the election, that the ANC lost support in only urban areas, thus becoming a rural party. In these mostly rural provinces, the EFF succeeded in eroding the ANC's support. As Phadi, Pearson and Lesaffre (2016) argue, the EFF's "ideology resonates with life experiences in this rural mining milieu. During the elections, self-professed EFF voters echoed some of the key pillars of the party's manifesto. Calls for economic freedom and denunciations of white monopoly capitalism strike a chord with many whose principal source of employment comes from massive multinational companies." Furthermore, several EFF organisers were local activists with a history of promoting community and labour struggles that predate the EFF. These

activists contributed to the EFF's success by connecting the party's rhetoric to local issues. The role played by these kinds of grass-roots activists, in growing the EFF, has been under-investigated by the media and political analysts.

In Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape, the party grew by over three points compared to 2014. It appears to have been more difficult for the party to make inroads into the Eastern Cape and Western Cape, where it won 5.3 percent and 2.73 percent, respectively. This overall performance masks the fact that in the Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay metros the party performed well in certain wards, eroding the ANC's support base. For example, in Kwanobuhle and Motherwell, the party won 11.2 percent and 11.27 percent respectively. Kwanobuhle was a stronghold of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), which was formerly part of the ANC alliance through the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) in 2015, but has supported opposition parties since then. It appears that disgruntled ANC voters in that area shifted to the EFF. The EFF won ward 43 by default, because the ANC failed to register a ward candidate; significantly, it beat the United Front candidate, reflecting its success in overtaking NUMSA in attracting working class support.

The Kingmakers

Despite not winning control of any council, the EFF's electoral performance allowed it to be kingmaker in several hung municipalities across the country. There were twenty-seven hung municipalities nationwide in every province except Mpumalanga. The

Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal had the most hung municipalities with eight and seven, respectively. Among the hung municipalities were four metro municipalities, including the City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Tshwane in Gauteng, and Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape. The hung metros are displayed in Table 2 below.

The biggest implication of the loss of the metros was that the ANC lost control of a significant portion of the local government budget. Two-thirds of all spending at municipal level is done by the eight metros, a total budget of R233bn in 2016. The ANC secured an electoral majority in only three of those and a minority government in one. It held seven before the election. Johannesburg's budget is the largest at R56.2bn, with Tshwane at R32.5bn and

Nelson Mandela Bay at R11.3bn. Ekurhuleni, where the ANC formed a coalition government, has R37.4bn. Cape Town, which has been governed by the DA for ten years, has R40bn. The ANC retains control over Buffalo City (R7.6bn), eThekweni (R38.5bn), and Mangaung (R9.6bn). The ANC now controls only 40 percent of the budget for metro municipalities compared to 83 percent before the election. This translates to a massive loss of resource of patronage, as well as an opportunity to demonstrate that it can improve the lives of the ever-important urban voters.

After the election, the EFF said that it was open to speaking to any party that approached it for a coalition deal, but it would not engage in any negotiation that sought to undermine the will of the people. It would approach negotiations with the

TABLE 2: Hung metropolitan municipalities

Party	Johannesburg	Ekurhuleni	Tshwane	Nelson Mandela Bay
ACDP	1	1	1	1
AIC	4	4	0	1
Al Jama-ah	1	0	0	0
ANC	121	109	89	50
COPE	1	1	1	1
DA	104	77	93	57
EFF	30	25	25	6
FF+	1	2	4	0
IFP	5	2	0	0
IRASA	0	1	0	0
PA	1	1	0	1
PAC	0	1	1	0
UDM	1	0	0	2
UFEC	0	0	0	0
Total	270	224	214	119
Governing Coalition	DA+	ANC+	DA+	DA+

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa

ANC from a principle of no coalitions, because it refused to legitimise the Zuma administration. This left it to consider a coalition deal with the DA, a party with the exact opposite ideological and political foundations. Many questioned the wisdom of the EFF going into coalition with a party that has private property, capitalism, deregulation and minimal state intervention as some of its key ideological tenets, especially in the three Gauteng metros that make up South Africa's economic heartland. In his post-election press conference, Malema made it clear that his party would not pursue coalitions at all costs. In the instance of the DA, this meant that the EFF would not join a coalition with the DA unless there had been an agreement on land expropriation and nationalisation. He set out three possible options being considered by the EFF: 1. Coalitions; 2. Re-run of elections – memorable political rhetoric, but not an option within the Municipal Electoral Act; 3. Abstain – choosing to abstain from all elections for mayors and speakers in hung municipalities (IOL, 5 August 2016).

In the event, the EFF decided against forming a coalition with either the ANC or the DA. The decision was announced at a press conference in Alexandra in the middle of the veld, outside the informal settlement of Setjwetla. The choice of the location was a masterful use of optics and political spectacle as it was the perfect juxtaposition to the DA's press conference held two hours later, on the same day, in a plush boardroom in wealthy Sandton, less than 10km from Alexandra (*Herald Live*, 17 August 2016). At the press conference, Malema detailed the conditions his party had set for a coalition with the ANC, including the

removal of Jacob Zuma as president of South Africa and the nationalisation of mines and banks. Because the ANC refused to accede to these conditions, Malema explained, the EFF decided not to go into coalition with a party of "kleptocracy and corruption". The EFF also refused to join a DA coalition, because it was "the party of white racists" (Malema, 2016c). Malema was insistent that the EFF would only go into power through a decisive mandate from the people and not "through a shortcut".

Nevertheless, the party had decided to support opposition parties to form governments in the various hung municipalities by voting with them to enable councils to be formed, but it would not participate in governance. What this meant was that the party would vote with the IFP in KwaZulu-Natal, the Service Delivery Forum in Rustenburg and the DA in the four hung metros. When asked about the contradictions between the EFF and DA's policy positions, Malema described the DA as a "better devil" than the ANC (Malema, 2016c). The EFF's vote influenced the election of leaders in 14 out of 27 hung municipalities, as noted in Table 3 on the following page. It helped bring DA mayors to power in Tshwane, Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay, Solly Msimanga, Herman Mashaba and Atholl Trollip, respectively.

The EFF voted for DA mayors in Metsimaholo municipality in the Free State (EWN, 22 August 2016), Mogale City in Gauteng (EWN, 19 August 2016), Modimolle/Mookgopong (*BusinessDay*, 23 August 2016) and Thabazimbi (SABC, 26 August 2016) in Limpopo. One of the EFF's goals was to vote out the ANC's leadership in

TABLE 3: Hung local municipalities in which the EFF was influential

Province	Municipality	Seat Allocation	Total Seats	Minimum Required	Winning Coalition
Free State	Metsimaholo	ANC 19, DA 12, EFF 8, MCA 2, VF+ 1	42	22	DA+
Gauteng	Mogale City	ANC 38, DA 27, EFF 9, VF+ 2, IFP 1	77	39	DA+
KwaZulu-Natal	Endumeni	ANC 6, IFP 4, DA 2, EFF 1	13	7	IFP+
	Nqutu	IFP 15, ANC 14, NFP 2, EFF 1, DA 1	33	17	Undecided
	AbaQulusi	ANC 21, IFP 19, DA 3, EFF 1	44	23	IFP+
	Jozini	ANC 19, IFP 18, EFF 1, DA 1, Independent 1	40	21	IFP+
	Mtubatuba	IFP 18, ANC 18, DA 2, EFF 1, AIC 1	40	21	IFP+
Limpopo	Thabazimbi	ANC 10, EFF 5, DA 5, TRA 2, VF+ 1	23	12	DA+
	Modimolle/ Mookgopong	ANC 13, DA 7, EFF 6, VF+ 2	28	15	DA+
North-West	Rustenburg	ANC 43, EFF 24, DA 14, F4SD 4, AIC 1, VF+ 1, UDM 1, BCM 1	89	45	ANC+

Source: Paul Berkowitz <http://paulberkowitz.co.za/coalition-politics-whats-possible-outside-of-the-metros/>

Rustenburg, in support of the miners in Marikana. After the first attempt to vote for municipal leaders was disrupted by fighting between EFF and ANC councillors, the ANC succeeded in having incumbent Mayor Mpho Khunon re-elected.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the EFF voted with the IFP to enable the latter to take control of the AbaQulusi (*Vryheid Herald*, 23 August 2016), Endumeni (*Northern Natal Courier*, 18 August 2016) and Jozini municipalities. After five unsuccessful attempts at forming a government, it seemed as though the

Jozini result would be decided by a coin toss until a mystery spoilt ballot within the ANC-faction gave the IFP candidate the lead (*BusinessDay*, 16 September 2016). The election of officials in Nqutu was still pending at the time of writing because the EFF had expelled its PR councillor from the party and had taken him to court to prevent him from taking his seat in the council. The councillor obtained a court order on 1 September to retain his position, so the EFF obtained a court order suspending all municipal meetings until a court had settled the intra-party dispute (IOL, 13 September

2016). This delayed the formation of a government in Nqutu.

The Nqutu case is the most extreme example of the inherent tensions in forming and sustaining governments in hung councils. Tensions between the EFF and DA in Johannesburg emerged when Herman Mashaba announced that the city would privatise the refuse removal service, Pikitup. The EFF threatened to challenge any such privatisation, as it goes against the party's core principles (IOL, 31 August 2016). On 14 September, the EFF reiterated that it would decide whether to support any initiatives of the DA-led municipalities, on a case-by-case basis, in Tshwane and Johannesburg. The EFF's Gauteng command committed itself to continuing land invasions in both cities and it "put the DA on notice" should its administrations fight efforts by the EFF to take unutilised land (*The Citizen*, 14 September 2016).

PROSPECTS FOR 2019

The 2016 municipal elections have consolidated the EFF's place, as an influential political actor, in the current period of transition in South Africa. With the deeply factionalised contestation in the ANC, the changing complexion of the DA, crisis in public administration and poor economic performance, the EFF has emerged as a party that speaks to popular concerns and desires. Its message of nationalisation, expropriation and Africanisation resonates with a significant proportion of the population. The extent to which it builds on the gains it made in this election will determine its future prospects, especially in the coming 2019 election. Three main challenges are worth highlighting.

Party Organisation and Discipline

Developing a sustainable party structure that not only mobilises people to attend rallies, but also organises them into recruitment, fundraising, research and policy units is critical for the EFF's longevity. Together with the DA, the EFF has the potential to push the ANC's electoral support below 50 percent in 2019, but this will only be possible through sustained party organising. Signs of discontent within the party emerged after the municipal elections, with newly elected councillors refusing to give 50 percent of their salaries to the party leadership for their first three months in office (*The Citizen*, 5 September 2016). This is a requirement to be a representative for the party, meant to pay off a loan the party secured to contest the local elections. Malema was quoted as saying "The party levy is going to help EFF not to be captured by private donors" (IOL, 5 September 2016).

The party leadership also pledged to remove PR councillors in wards where the party received less than 100 votes and replace them with candidates from wards where the EFF received the most votes. Malema argued that these councillors had not fulfilled their duty to win votes for the party and they would be forced "to become community activists" (*Times Live*, 5 September 2016). The reason for this was to avoid becoming like the ANC and "hoarding a large group of careerists". According to Malema, "the principle of rewarding progress and rejecting mediocrity will, henceforth, underpin the EFF's list processes, including in the lead-up to the 2019 general election". (*Times Live*, 6 September 2016).

These kinds of top-down decisions risk alienating the party leadership from its support base. This is, especially, the case in areas where its grassroots support comes from existing local activism. As Phadi, Pearson and Lesaffre (2016) state, some party activists in Limpopo "fear that the ANC's authoritative decision-making style is being reconfigured within the EFF". An EFF spokesperson encapsulated this concern: "The minute Malema comes here and wants to control us, and not listen to us, that's when I will start to fight the EFF. I support the policies of the EFF, not Julius Malema." In another incident, soon after the elections, a disgruntled group of EFF activists in eThekweni Municipality called for the party's Regional Command Team to be disbanded, because of alleged discrepancies in the list of regional PR candidates that the party submitted to the IEC (SABC, 20 August 2016). There were also disputes about the council list in Sedibeng District Municipality (*The Citizen*, 16 August 2016). As a result, the party has disbanded provincial leaderships of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, for ill discipline and the misrepresentation of party membership.

The legacy of the party's origins in the ANC and the deep distrust of the ruling party leave the EFF vulnerable. Its ability to develop a new party culture unique from the ANC, as well as developing a functional grassroots network of activists, will determine its future success.

Governance Challenges

The EFF's decision not to join any coalitions and to remain in opposition in all hung municipalities came as a surprise. Many

anticipated that the party would be eager to test its revolutionary ideals in practise. Furthermore, positions in municipal government come with excellent salary packages, which would be a boon both to individual councillors and to the party that would receive a share. By deciding to stay out of government, the EFF stayed true to its fundamental ideals, but forfeited the benefits of incumbency. This is unusual in African politics (and indeed, South African politics), where the desire for power often overrides other strategic considerations. Given the EFF's inexperience in municipal governance and its strident rhetoric, remaining in opposition was the best strategic decision for the party. Much of municipal governance is about technical service delivery issues such as sanitation, water provision and road maintenance that do not lend themselves easily to the EFF's revolutionary rhetoric. The party does not have many of the technical skills and know-how required to be effective at municipal level. So the decision to avoid the test of governance, at this stage in its formation, is shrewd. As Malema (2016c) stated in the Alex press conference, "we are not an organisation of positions". He insisted that the primary goal was to build the party, indicating that the party's leadership is taking a long view of its role in South African politics. Moreover, had the EFF joined the DA in government, it would have done so as a minority partner putting it in the awkward position of appearing to rubber-stamp DA majority decisions. This goes against the party's identity as a popular radical movement. Remaining in the opposition allows the EFF to maintain its identity and retain the bargaining chip of being able to collapse DA-run municipal governments.

The EFF seems to want to pursue a kind of "guerrilla governance" at municipal level by occupying land, supporting community protests and providing services, itself, in the wards it governs. In his post-election press conference, Malema promised that all the wards won by the EFF would have basic necessities such as water, even if it meant the party had to dig boreholes, itself, in the communities it represents. In Gauteng, the provincial leadership has said that it will continue "land invasions" on unoccupied land, regardless of having supported the DA to take power in Johannesburg and Tshwane. The EFF disrupted the commencement of Herman Mashaba's inaugural speech as mayor, because it wanted the house to acknowledge the grievances of DA activists who had, apparently, not been paid by the party. EFF councillors claimed to be standing for the workers' rights by supporting the protest (*Eyewitness News*, 13 September 2016).

Whether these actions will attract and consolidate support for the EFF remains to be seen. The attendance of EFF MPs at policy committee meetings in the national parliament, since 2014, has been relatively poor – 34 percent, in 2015, compared to the ANC and DA's 73 percent. These committees are where the real work of parliament is done – writing laws and holding the executive accountable. On 19 September 2016, the party announced that Julius Malema had been relieved of all his parliamentary committee duties to enable him to focus on developing the party's structures before the 2019 general elections. EFF spokesman Fana Mokoena said, "Mr Malema will mainly be deployed on a stringent programme to build the EFF everywhere in the country. The secretary general, Godrich Gardee, will not be in parliament that often

either, because he has to be mainly office-bound in an organisational capacity". (*Times Live*, 19 September 2016). Malema has said that the party wants to grow its support in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape where party structures were established quickly and are relatively weak: "We are concerned, because if we don't get the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal right, we can forget about growing the EFF's influence in the country" (Malema quoted in *Times Live*, 6 September 2016). This focus on building a sustainable party structure may mitigate the need to prove itself in formal institutional politics.

Youth Vote

South Africa's population and electorate are becoming younger. People aged 15 to 29 make up 28.19 percent of the national population; 55 percent of eligible voters aged 20 to 29 are registered. A look at the turnout statistics of the 2011 and 2014 elections, demonstrates that young people turnout at higher rates in national elections than in municipal ones.

TABLE 4: 2011 turnout by age

Age Group (in years) % Turnout	
Age	Turnout
18-19	69%
20-29	48%
30-39	49%
40-49	61%
50-59	70%
60-69	74%
70-79	70%
80+	52%

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa
Municipal Elections Report 2011:47

TABLE 5: 2014 turnout by age

Age Group (in years) % Turnout	
Age	Turnout
18-19	83%
20-29	72%
30-39	69%
40-49	74%
50-59	80%
60-69	80%
70-79	73%
80+	55%

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa National and Provincial Report 2014:44

In 2011, 48 percent of voters aged 20 to 29 turned out to vote compared to 75 percent of women and 69 percent of men in 2014. This discrepancy can be explained by the difference in voting rules in different elections. At municipal elections, people are required to vote in the wards in which they are registered. In general elections, people can vote at any voting station in the country – on both national and provincial ballots if they vote in the province in which they are registered, and only on the national ballot if they vote outside their province. Municipal election rules, thus, discriminate against transitory populations of migrant workers or students who often reside far from where they are registered and lack the time, motivation or knowledge to update their registration before elections. What is clear is that young people do turnout to vote when they are registered and are allowed to do so by the rules.

This bodes well for the EFF in 2019. As was discussed in the previous section, the party's message resonates with young people and much of its support is in informal settlements with large migrant populations. It will be easier for its natural support base to participate in the 2019 general elections, which should boost the party's share of the vote. The challenge for the EFF is to encourage the 45 percent of eligible voters under 30, who are not on the voters' roll, to register to vote. Young people do participate politically, through informal means such as protests. If the EFF can convince them to participate in formal political structures, such as elections, it will have succeeded in securing itself a sustainable electoral base.

CONCLUSION

Since it burst onto the electoral scene, the EFF has proved to be an excellent disrupter of South African politics. Using its unique brand of political spectacle, the party has succeeded in setting the political agenda and sparking popular interest in political institutions. Unlike the ANC-breakaway party that preceded it, the Congress of the People (COPE), the EFF managed to sustain the electoral promise of its debut elections, in 2014, in the challenging terrain of local government elections in 2016. One of the reasons it managed to do this was by avoiding the kind of leadership disputes that caused COPE's implosion. The challenge the EFF faces now is to expand its support base while managing competing interests and proving itself as a serious contender for government in 2019.

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